

1076
Britannia Victrix :

OR, THE

TRIUMPHS

OF THE

ROYAL NAVY,

In the late *Victorious* *Engagement* with the

FRENCH FLEET

MAY, 1692.

A Pindarick POEM.

—*Domitosque Herculea manu
Telluris juvenes, unde Periculum
Fulgens contremuit Domus
Saturnis Veteri.*—

Hor. lib. 2. Ode 12.

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Britannia Victrix :

I.

FOrbear a while, my dearest Friend, forbear,
 With more glad *Tidings* to regale my ear,
 Least crowding *Tales* of new Success,
 Which to my *Thoughts* so fast their *Welcome* press,
 Should even the *Pleasure* of the *Mind* destroy,
 And my *Soul* sink beneath the mighty *Joy*;
 Gently, and by degrees relate,
 The *Gallick-Fleet's* *Inglorious* Fate;
 But let not from thy *Lab'ring* *Tongue*,
 So very quick the welcome *Accents* *Throng*,
 Tho sweet are all the *Tidings* of thy *Breath*,
 I would not be with *Roses* prest to *Death*,
 Some *Gall* in all our *Pleasures* *Fate* Distills,
 And *Joy* wound up too high, too often *Kills* :
 So when *Diagoras* of *Old*,
 Whose three brave *Sons* had won *immortal* *Fame*,
 By *Prizes* in th' *Olympick* *Game*,
 Was by themselves of their good *Fortune* told,
 When they their *Garlands* humbly laid
 Upon their *Aged* *Father's* *Head*,
 With such excess of *Joy* his *Blood* was *Fir'd*,
 That in their *Arms* the *Good* *Old* *Man* *Expir'd*.

I I.

But yet if ever an excess of Joy,
 Might be allow'd to be no Crime,
 It must be surely at this time,
 A Victory so bravely won,
 And with such Vigour carried on,
 That Neptune did in a full Council own,
 Since he the Oceans Government had known,
 He never saw such manly Courage shown,
 As did the *English* when they Fought;
 And wonder'd by what Magick Spell,
 Which on the Hearts of *Frenchmen* fell,
 They should in such confusion run,
 And would have Sail'd as quick as Wind and Thought.
 For scarcely was th' *Ingagement* o're,
 But his *Blew Tritans* from the Shore,
 Took up the Wrecks from tatter'd Ships did fall,
 Which they in memory of the Day,
 Of the auspicious Conqu'ring *M A Y*,
 Hung up as Trophies in their Masters watry Hall.

III.

Auspicious Month indeed, from whence we may,
 Of our new *Happiness* the *Æra* Date,
 Since all the Storms, which did of late
 So threaten us, are now blown quite away.
 See a most pleasing Scene appears,
 Of Rolling, Smiling, Peaceful Years;
 When free from War and its Alarms,
 Each shall his Property Possess,
 Under the shade of Welcome Peace,
 Fearless of Foreign and Domestick Harms;
 For when, (as Poets feign,) *Adromeda*,
 Chain'd to a Rock, stood still expos'd
 To each Sea-Monster's hungry Jaws;
 So, but of late Fair *Albion* lay,
 Till Victory, like *Perseus* came,
 To Rescue the Afflicted Dame,
 Chas'd the grim Tyrants of the Sea,
 In narrow Creeks to be inclos'd,
 And to the *Brittish* Ocean gave new Laws

IV.

Poets in this, as well as Painters share,
 That what they would attempt to do, they dare,
 But what kind *Muse* will now my *Breast Inspire*,
 With *Waller's Rapture*, or with *Denham's Fire*,
 Those Noble *Bards* did in immortal Verse,
 Some late *Sea Fights* so movingly Rehearſe
 Each line with ſuch new Spirit did they write,
 Readers in fancy might behold the *Fight*,
 As plain as if with *Telleſcopes* they ſtood
 On ſhore, and each minuteſt Action view'd,
 Of warm *Engagements* on the *Purple Flood*.

Come then my *Muse*, and furl thy *Fancy's Sail*,
 And on the ſtreams of *Helicon*,
 Launch out with a ſucceſſful Gale.
 But ah, if in the bold Attempt,
 (As who from chance can be exempt?)
 Thou ſhouldeſt in ſpite of thy Endeavours fail,
 'Twill yet of thee, as once of *Phaeton*
 Be ſaid, altho he was undone
 In guiding Chariot of the Sun,
 Yet for the bare attempt ſome praile he Won.

V.

Behold, with mighty Pleaſure, *Muse*, behold,
 Thoſe floating *Caſtles of the Sea*,
 Impregnable to *Guns* and *Geld*;
 Obſerve the *Royal Navy* how ſhe Glides,
 And Cuts the Silver Froth of yeilding *Tides*,
 In proud Proceſſion how they go,
 To meet the *Lurking* and *Absconding Foe*;
 For ſeveral Leagues they ſpread their *Canvas Wings*,
 A goodly fight which mighty pleaſure brings,
 With more Maſteſtick Pride they Sail,
 Than the *Venetian Fleet* by *Bucentoro* Led,
 When with her mighty *Duke* ſhe goes
 In pomp the *Adriatick Sea* to Wed,
 See how they *Tide* it with a merry Gale,
 While from each Deck is heard the Voice
 Of the loud *Trumpets Martial* noiſe,

A sound which Cowards can inspire,
 And in the coldest Breast strike sparks of *Fire* ;
 Hark how the *Iritons* on the *Rocks* which dwell,
 With pleasure hear the *Warlike* sign,
 And each one winds his *Concave* shell,
 To make the *Harmony* still more *Divine*.

VI.

On *Quarter Deck* (the *Post* of *Honour*) stands,
 The *Hero* who the *Ship* Commands,
 With manly *Terror* on his *Brow*,
 To his *Ships* *Crew* he seems to show,
 That *Danger* is a word he does not know :
 Nor come the *Sailors* far behind,
 Tho' moving in a lower *Sphere*,
 Each has a *Brave* and *Noble* *Mind*,
 And scorns to name or think of *Fear* ;
 If one on *Board* they thought there was,
 Who hid a *Coward* in his *Breast*,
 Quite *Over-board* they'd throw the *Ass*,
 Least he should prove *Infectious* to the rest ;
 With long *Delays* they all impatient grow,
 And only wish to meet the *skulking* *Foe*.

VII.

A *Sail*, a *Sail*, — I have a *Fleet* in *ken*,
 From *Top* *mast* *Head* is heard, — a *welcome* *sound*,
 Which *Ecchos* all the *Navy* round,
 And with new *Souls* inspires the *Men*,
 Each to his *Post* in *Order* *Runs*,
 As chearfully to tend the *Guns*,
 As *Shepherd* e're at dawn of *Day* did creep,
 O're *Verdant* *Lawns* to tend his gentle *Sheep*.
 The *Line* of *Battle* *Form'd*, each ready stands
 To wait his *Admirals* *Commands*
 When he shall *Fire*, and when to *Vere* and *Turn*,
 When to *break* *through*, and resolutely *Burn* ;
 And tho' a wild *Confusion* seems to *Reign*,
 On a *Ships* *Deck* when *Battles* near ;
 Yet one may plainly see that ev'ry *Man*,
 As little of *Disorder* knows, as *Fear*,

With

With spreading Sails they see the *threatning* *Foe*
 Approach ; which they as gladly meet,
 As e're did *Bridegroom* on his *Wedding Night*,
 Th' *Embraces* of the *Blushing Fair*,
 And wish to feel the first *Provoking Blow*.

VIII.

And now begins the *warm Dispute*,
 Throwing from sides of *Oaken Walls*,
 Their *Death Denouncing Iron Balls*,
 Each other *Mortally Salute* ;
 See how the *shot* their *Sails* and *Rigging* tears,
 While *Splinters* thick as *Hail*,
 More *Mischief* do than *Cannon-Ball*.
 Now a *Broad side* a *Ships Deck* almost *Clears*,
 For *Bullets* no *Distinction* know
 Between an *Admiral* and a *Common Tar*,
 But both promiscuously *Bow*,
 When it comes whistling through the *Air* ;
 Down to the *shades* the *Dead* in *clusters* go,
 While on the *Deck* the *Wounded* lye,
 And in good earnest wish to *Dye*,
 Since *Life* is grown a *Burthen* now ;
 Now *Fate* and *Death* their publick *Revels* keep,
 And leave the *Land* a while, to *Frolick* in the *Deep*.

IX.

The *Goddess Victory* at *Distance* stood,
 And saw the *Contest* on the *Purple Flood*,
 (Now *Purple* grown indeed, with *human Blood*)
 At last with mighty *haste* her *Course* she bore,
 And with her *Silver Wings* our *Navy* shadow'd o're,
 Whilst all the *Fleet* with *Joy* the *Omen View'd*,
 And for her *Welcome*, loud *Discharges* Roar ;
 And tho but just before,
 The *French* with *brav'ry* kept the *Watry Feild*,
 Since them does wisht *Success* forsake,
 Their *Cannons* now as faint as *Eccho's* speak ;
 Their *Petards* *Languish*, their *Guns* are weak,
 And all *Dispirited* prepare to *Run* or *Yeild*.

X.

But whither, whicher, O ye rigid Stars,
 For safety shall the *Gallick Fleet* retire
 To disappoint 'em, since the *Winds* conspire;
Homewards their *Course* they cannot steer,
 And no kind *Hospitable Harbour's* near;
 No *Turkish Bay*, nor *Creek of Algierine*,
 Can on the *Brittish Seas* be seen;
 Their *Brethren of the Turbant* would
 In their Distress have helpt them if they could,
 But ah, no *Turkish Port* their *Navy* can secure,
 The *Dardanells* are far from *Cape Barfleur*.

XI.

Barfleur, a Word vvhich after ages shall
 To mind vvith grateful Memory recal,
 And lessen much the *Fam'd Report*
 Of *Bullogne Seige*, *Poictours*, and *Argencourt*,
 Places where bravely our *Forefathers Fought*,
 And home their *Conquering Lawrels* brought,
 By much *Barfleur* their *Glory* does out-vy,
 Where we obtain'd a greater *Victory*,
 Those *Battles* formerly we won,
 Perhaps might shake the *Gallick Throne*;
 But the *Convulsion* soon was o're,
 This has done infinitely more,
 For novv *Determin'd* is the *Fate of France*,
 Its *Ruin fixt*, its *Doom is Seal'd*
 Which has for *Ages* been conceal'd,
 And all its hopes of *Universal Monarchy*,
 Now *Languish* in a dull *Expiring Trance*.

XII.

Their hasty *Flight* my *Muse* does novv Descry,
 Like *Parthians* shooting vvhile they run,
 Casting a fearful look behind,
 Whilst every loud *Discharging Gun*,
 Does only bruise the *Air* and crush the *Wind*;
 Like trembling *Hares* upon a plain they fly,
 Double, Redouble and all *Courses* try
 A vvretched Life to save,
 They foam vvith *Anger* and vvith fury *Rave*.

They foam with Anger, and with Fury rave,
 In haste they run, and we in haste pursue,
 Cutting with nimble Keels the *Silver Wave* ;
 And tho they swift as Lightning flew,
 Our Fleet as fast could Sail, since Winds and Waves conspire,
 To further ours, and frustrate their Desire.

XIII.

Too weak alas, are all Attempts of Verse,
Great RUSSELL's Glory to rehearse ;
 Nor can the nicest Studied Praise,
 Sufficient Trophies to his *Vertue* Raise,
 A Work deserving Eame and Bays. }
RUSSELL a Name, which after times shall Bless,
 When they in *Chronicles* shall Read,
 His mighty Actions and his great Success :
 And what against the *Gallick* Fleet he did ;
 Born to revenge his Noble Kinsman's Blood ; *Lord Russell.*
 Who to *French* Councils fell a Sacrifice,
 But he has bravely sluc'd a flood,
 Of purple Gore, for ev'ry precious Drop of his.

XIV.

Tho the *Illustrious House* of *Bedford* claims,
 A share of Glory with the first,
 Of all the *English Nobles* Names ;
 And can as many Trophies show,
 Upon her Antient *Arms* and *Crest*,
 As any Warlike Hero's who were Born,
 Their Name and Country to adorn.
 Yet Envy must it self allow,
 Tho dazling Beams of Light her Orb does fill,
 That by the *Admiral* of the Name,
 (Darling of Victory and Faune)
 She shines with greater, brighter Lustre still ;
 And sure it is a happiness,
 Which few great Families does bless,
 But theirs, to whom the mighty Luck does fall,
 To have produc'd a *Martyr* and an *Admiral*.

If Subjects we with *Sovereigns* may compare,
 (Tho' we the mighty Difference must allow)
 With his Victorious *Prince* does *Russell* share
 In all the Hardships and Fatigues of War,
 If Heavenly Bodies, as the Learned hold,
 Infencibles do move affairs below,
 Who without wonder can behold,
 A Noble *General* dispence,
 Through a vast Camp his warning Influence,
 Whilest every Warlike Soldiers Limb,
 Seems but to be a part of him.
 Just so at Sea, the Sailers one and all,
 Each Morning bless their *much* Lord *Admiral*;
 To doubt of wisht Success what Mortal can,
 When too such Heroes do the Cause maintain,
Nassau at Land, and *Russel* on the Main.

XVI.

Hard Fate of Generals in War,
 Who scarce doe Nature's common Blessings share,
 When our brave Admiral all day,
 In Fire and Smoke maintain'd the fray,
 One would have thought that *Balmy Sleep* at night,
 Should his tir'd Sences to repose invite,
 But still his Manly Cares deny
 Rest to his Thoughts, or Slumber to his Eye;
 But yet behold! to recompence
 The Burthen of his weary Sence,
 A Night-piece, *Victory* prepares,
 To please his Eyes, and gratifie his Ears.
 Three Ships at distance, like three *Meteors* show,
 Drest all in Flames from poop to prow,
 By Gun-Powder's unlucky Blow,
 Whilest the poor Mortals did inhabit there,
 By Destinies too rigid Frown,
 Are doom'd at once to Burn and Drown,
 Thrown up like *Rockets* in the Air,
 Then down again into the Deep with wild Despair.

XVII.

For little Service little Praise is due,
 But if the Thoughts Reverse we view,
 What store of *Lawrels* will not fall,
 Upon the Brows of conqu'ring *Delawall*;
 For when by winds and *Brittish* Fury chas'd,
 To *Cape de Wyke* the French for shelter got,
 And on that little watry spot,
 Esteem'd themselves secure, and danger past,
 Then the *Vice Admiral of the Red*,
 Came with his Squadron well prepar'd,
 To do whatever Courage dar'd.
 They saw the Skulking Ships in Corners lie,
 As if to move they were afraid;
 And since the Tide admittance does deny,
 To Ships of Burthen they prepar'd,
 With Boats well Man'd, and Fire-ships to declare
 Defiance to the Enemy:
 See, see, the wish'd desir'd Success,
 Which does their bold endeavour blest.
 Behold, the flames from *Gallick Decks*, which rise
 To *Victory*, a Grateful Sacrifice,
 Whilst Rigid Fate all Succours still denies.

XVIII.

Behold the Glory of *their Fleet*,
 The *Royal-Sun* now all on flame,
 A most unlook'd for *Exit* meet,
 While with impatience the gay *Gilded Dame*.
 Views the Incroachments of the Fire,
 Upon her Gallant rich Attire:
 She does with passion rave, with anger weep,
 And as *she* downward goes,
 Her Hissing Curses throws;
 Then sinks a Hundred Fathom in the deep,
 The *Heavenly Sun*, when he has run his Race
 About the Globe, yet every welcome Night,
 Plunges in *Thetis* watrey soft embrace,
 Next Morning rising with new Rays of Light,
 But the *French Sun*, once darling of their Eyes,
 Is set, and never never more will rise;

So vain, short liv'd, and Transitory,
Are all the Poms and Shows of humane Glory.

XIX.

If he who burnt *Diana's* Temple, stands,
Recorded in the *Book of Fame*,
(The bold Attempt of an inglorious Slave,
That was a Villains Act, but this a brave)
Can be to *Heath* deny'd a Glorious Name,
Who dar'd to set the *Royal Sun* on Flame;
The *Conquerant* a noble Vessel made,
From Head to Stern, a heap of burning Brands,
With Fury see the Boats invade;
The *Admirable*, who although *she* makes
Some faint resistance of the others Fate partakes;
Fowls his Ship, deserv'd a better Fate,
(The bold may be unfortunate)
For in the hottest of the Fight,
When Clouds of Smoak made Artificial Night,
He slackned not a Joynt, nor shrank a Nerve,
And though deny'd his wish'd Success,
Yet to his Praise this Truth we must confess,
Bravely to dare is bravely to deserve.

XX.

Can nothing scape discerning *RUSSELL's* Eye,
Who sure has got a Writ from Destiny,
The *Gallick Fleet* to overturn,
To Admiral *Rook* he Order gives,
In *Cape le Hogue*, their Ships to burn,
Who the Commission joyfully Receives,
And boldly Ventures on the Enterprize,
Six over night in flames expire,
And Morrows Dawn six more observes on fire,
Whilst *English* do with pleasure see
This *Sea Burnt-Offering* made to *Victory*,
A Grateful Morning, and an *Evenings* Sacrifice;
But still to make the Vict'ry more compleat,
With their own Guns the Enemy we beat;
From their Mud Plat-forms, now by Fates Decree,
Successless grown, both by the Land and Sea.

XXI.

Tell me who can, my *labouring Muse*
Asby's and *Shovel's* Praise refuse;
 Rais'd by a *Prince*, who best their Merits knew,
 Who found them always brave, and always true:
 To *Honour's Temple* we may truly say,
Desert now only leads the way,
 And not as heretofore,
 When Interest, Bribes, and blind unthinking chance
 Did thousands more than *Worth* advance,
 And th' greatest share in Court Preferments bore,
 Cautious in Council, they prepare
 For all the worst events in War:
 But when the *wish'd for Minute* does invite,
 And the *loud Cannon* calls to fight,
 Fearless of Danger on their Decks they stood,
 Ready to Sacrifice their Blood,
 For the *best Cause*, and their dear Country's good.

XXII.

Who without Sorrow, and a kind Regret,
 Can think of *Daring Carter's* Fate?
 Or when he hears how valiant *Hastings* dy'd,
 Refuse the Tribute of a Tear,
 Fate ev'n in Death would not their loves divide;
 Who to each other were in Life so dear,
 The Verdant *Lawrels* heretofore,
 Which they upon their Temples wore;
 Now since their Deaths appear more fresh and green,
 And their brave actions, which before
 The World in Whispers only car'd to Name,
 Is now become the welcome Talk of Fame,
 Who to the World their Daring Acts will tell,
 While Sighs and Tears ring out their Funeral Knell.

XXII.

Nor must the *Common Seamen* want their Praise,
 Who more than common Bravery show'd,
 And by undaunted Courage did express
 The Love which their Countries cause they ow'd:
 For *one and all* they firmly stood,
 Each free from Cowardise or Fear,
 To *Random Shots* expos'd his Bosom bare;
 Like Wall of Brass, and not of Flesh and Blood;

D

And

And tho' the boysterous Seas,
 Their proper Element for fighting is;
 Yet when near *Coast of Normandy* they drew,
 And had the Army then in view,
 Impatient of Delays they all implore,
 To try their fortune on the shoar;
 For flush'd with late success they did not doubt
 To give the Enemy a total rout,
 But their Commander wisely check'd their Rage,
 Not suff'ring them so rashly to ingage,
 Tho' late Defeats did more Defeats preface.

XXIV.

Heark in loud Confort how the *Trumpets* joyn,
 A grateful sound to hear,
 Which does to ev'ry listning Ear,
 The welcome News of Vict'ry bear ;
 News truly Charming and Divine,
 Which may with Songs supply the *Mighty Nine*,
 Whilst *Fame* with strong and active Lungs,
 Borrows a Thousand Thousand Tongues,
 On *Albions* happy shores to tell,
 How a *French Fleet* esteem'd invincible,
 To *Brittish* Rage, a Grateful *Victim* fell.

XXV.

Hail! *Welcome News*, with treble welcome Hail,
 No little Infant e're was seen,
 The Milk from Breast more greedily to suck in,
 Than we with pleasure catch thy wond'rous tale,
 Suspence that torture of the Mind,
 Long had our Thoughts in doubts dark Cave confin'd,
 Yet hope the gay *Fore-runner* of *Success*,
 With gladfom smiles would often bless
 Our Anxious Souls until at last,
 We did the *Luscious Banquet* taste,
 Who the exalted pleasure can express,
 When *Tidings* of a *Victory*,
 Confirm'd, by all convincing certainty,
 From dark Suspensions did our Souls Release;
 The Joys, bless'd Souls *unbodied* feel,
 Tho' far above our pow'r to tell,
 Yet we in part their Mighty Transports guess;
 By lively *Mirth* which still controuls,

And

And keeps her Revels in our Souls,
So great, that words cannot its Love exprefs.

XXVI.

The *thinking States-man*, when the News he hears,
How e're his Thought may be employ'd,
In projects for his Countries good,
Now lays aside the *weight of publick cares*,
And with a Mind unbent, prepares
To share the common Joy, since now
In Mirth to Revel, *Stoicks* would allow,
The *Plodding Man of Business* too,
Smooths up the wrinkles of his Brow,
Puts on a chearful look, and seems to say,
His Mind shall now keep *Holy-day*;
The *Rustick* leaves his weary Plough,
And on a Lovely Verdant Green,
Are *Tytirus* and *Phyllis* seen,
Dancing with other *Nymphs* and *Swains*,
Forgetting all their Amorous pains,
They trip it o're the *Lawns*, & frisk upon the *Plains*.
All Men from high to low degree,
Are fill'd with Mirth and Jollity,
And *Albion* enjoys an *Universal Jubilee*.

XXVII.

Amidst the *Publick Triumphs*, yet appear
Some Angry Looks, and Clouded Brows,
Faces, which Melancholy wear,
And who the wond'rous Riddle knows,
That Discontent should have a Seat,
So near, where *all the Sons of Joy* are met:
Wonder no more, but pity rather
This envious Crooking Murmuring Brood,
With Hopes uncertain as the Weather,
Foes to their own, and to the *Publick good*:
But let the *Brave and Loyal Heart*,
Insensible of Envy's smart;
For *Mighty Joy* allow a mighty Scope,
And still for more and more Successes hope.

XXVIII.

But must the *mightry Joy* be known,
To *Albion's* happy Land alone?
No, No, *Industrious Fame* takes care,

To spread the *Tidings* far and near,
 Which does, as different Intrest guides,
 Their Souls with different Passions fill,
 And first, with winged speed she glides,
 To great *Nassau*, the News to tell,
 Whom Heav'n indulgently does bless
 In all his actions with a wish'd Success;
 The welcome News he soon Communicates,
 To's Princely *Allies* and *Confederates*;
 Who knowing that the Fortune of their Arms,
 Depend upon the Fate of *his*:
 Bless the *kind Omen* which alarms,
 With Pannick fear, th' Insulting Foe,
 Who with a strange Amazement hear
 Their ill Success, in *Naval War*,
 Dreading by Land another *Fatal Blow*.

XXIX.

Go on, *Great Prince*, till thy great Actions swell
 So very high, that even *Fame*
 Shall think't a *Talk almost impossible*,
 To after Ages half thy Acts to tell,
 But ah! what *spot of Earth* is there,
 Upon this lower Globes *Terrestrial Sphere*,
 Which has not heard thy Glorious Name?
 Thou hast a Thousand Actions done,
 Which will for ever make thee known,
 Whilst *Princes*, who by different arts have try'd
 To purchase *Lasting Fame*, have been deny'd,
 And as *inglorious* liv'd, *ingloriously* have dy'd.

XXX.

But whilst abroad he seeks Renown by Arms,
 Can we at home forget *Maria's* Charms?
 Who while her *Royal Consort* shares
 The long Fatigue of *Forreign Wars*,
 Employs her most *Industrious Cares*;
 For *Albion's* safety too too happy Isle,
 While on thy Banks such *Constelations* smile.
 But oh how bright will be the Sphere,
 When after all the longer fatigues,
 Of War and Stratagems close Intrigues:
WILLIAM and *MARY* shall thro' *Europe* be
 Esteem'd the *Arbiters* of Peace and Liberty.

F I N I S.

